

As corn planting neared completion, soybean planting accelerated. During the second week of the month, Iowa and Minnesota growers planted nearly half of their soybean crop. By the end of the month, 85% of the soybean acreage was planted, and progress was nearly 2 weeks ahead of the 5-year average.

Small grain seeding progressed well ahead of normal in the northern Great Plains. By May 21, spring wheat and barley were 95 and 96% planted, respectively, more than 2 weeks ahead of the 5-year average for both crops. Oat seeding was complete in Iowa and Nebraska at mid-month and by May 21, planting was 92% complete, more than 1 week ahead of last year and well ahead of the 5-year average.

Cotton planting accelerated and progressed well ahead of normal in Oklahoma after a period of wet weather early in the month. Dry weather also aided cotton planting in Missouri, where 90% of the crop was planted by mid-month, nearly double the normal pace. In North Carolina, planting lagged behind normal early in the month, was ahead of normal at mid-month, and equaled the 5-year average after mid-month.

In some areas, especially in the southern High Plains and Southeast, topsoil moisture shortages hindered planting progress. Cotton planting advanced slowly in Georgia, Louisiana, and South Carolina and lagged behind normal in all three States most of the month. In Texas, planting progressed slightly ahead of average, even though dry soils hindered planting on the High Plains. Peanut planting was also delayed by dry soils in the Southeast, progressing behind normal in Alabama, Florida, and Georgia throughout the month.

Planting and fieldwork were hindered by above-normal precipitation along the western Gulf Coast, parts of eastern Texas, and some inland areas of the Mississippi Delta. Rice planting was behind normal in Mississippi when the month began and progressed slowly most of the month. Above-normal precipitation boosted moisture supplies and aided crop development in northern California, but planting and fieldwork delays were minor.

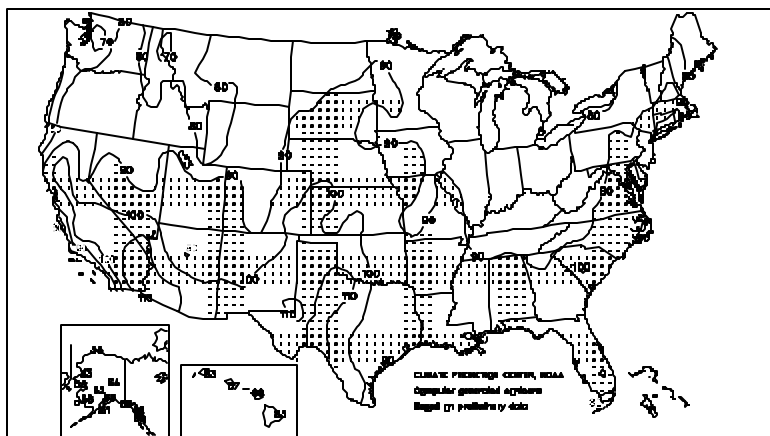
Early month corn emergence was aided by above-normal temperatures, although many seeds remained in dry soils for nearly 2 weeks before sprouting. Light, scattered showers relieved excessive dryness and promoted germination in some areas, but moisture shortages remained widespread, especially in the western Corn Belt.

As mid-month approached, substantial rainfall aided emergence and replenished topsoil moisture supplies in parts of the central Corn Belt. In the western and southern Corn Belt, well-timed light rainfall aided emergence, but provided little reserve for crop development. During the week ended May 14, corn emergence advanced 50 and 48% in Wisconsin and Iowa, respectively, while more than 40% of the acreage emerged in Illinois, Minnesota, and Ohio. By May 28, 93% of the corn and 67% of the soybeans were emerged, more than 1 week ahead of last year's pace.

In the northern Great Plains, adequate moisture supplies in most areas promoted germination of small grains. On May 14, spring wheat and barley emergence was at 63 and 62%, respectively, more than double the 30% normal for spring wheat and nearly

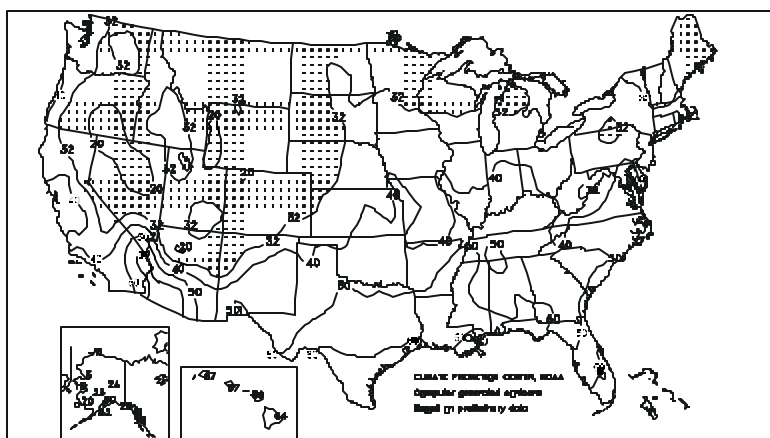
Extreme Maximum Temperature (°F)

MAY 2000



Extreme Minimum Temperature (°F)

MAY 2000



twice the 33-percent average for barley. By May 28, both crops were 91% emerged, but conditions deteriorated in Montana due to increasing moisture shortages.

Winter wheat developed ahead of normal due to warm weather. Forty percent of the Kansas crop and about one-third of the Illinois and Missouri acreage was heading by May 7, well ahead of normal in all three States. Fields rapidly matured in the lower Mississippi Valley, southern Great Plains, and Southeast, with nearly all acreage headed by mid-May in Arkansas, North Carolina, and Oklahoma. After mid-month, development accelerated in Nebraska and Ohio, where 45 and 63% of the crop advanced to the heading stage during the week ended May 21.

Soft red winter wheat rapidly developed in the eastern Corn Belt during the final week of the month, as heading advanced 30 and 21 percentage points in Michigan and Ohio, respectively. Hard red winter wheat rapidly advanced to the heading stage in Colorado and South Dakota. On May 28, 87% of the crop was at the heading stage or beyond, more than 1 week ahead of last year and the 5-year average for this date.

Wheat harvest progressed with few rain delays in the southern Great Plains, and by May 28, harvest was 7 and 9% complete in Texas and Oklahoma, respectively. Wheat rapidly matured in Kansas, where nearly one-half of the wheat was turning color on May 28, compared with 14% a year ago and 13% normally turning color by this date.